

Serial No. 09/689,957

In the specification:

On page 1, please delete the Related Applications paragraph in its entirety and insert the following:

--Related Applications

c This application is related to, and claims priority from, New Zealand Patent Application, entitled A Container Having A Pressure Responsive Panels filed on February 25, 1999, Application No. 334372; and Patent Cooperation Treaty Application, entitled A Container Having A Pressure Responsive Panels, filed on February 24, 2000, International Application No. PCT/NZ00/00019, which are fully incorporated herein by reference.--

In the claims:

Please *delete* claims 1-26 without prejudice.

Please *amend* claims 27-36, 41 and 51 as follows:

ab 27. (Amended) A container suitable for containing liquid and having at least one controlled deflection flex panel for accommodating pressure change induced in the container, said flex panel having longitudinal and transverse extents defining a plane of said flex panel, said flex panel having a flexure region [with a projection] projecting away from [extending outwardly relative to] said plane and a flexure initiator region [with a projection] projecting away from [extending outwardly relative to] said plane to a lesser extent than said [projection of said] flexure region, said [projections] regions merging together so that said initiator region can flex inwardly relative to said plane in response to pressure changes and cause said flexure region to progressively flex in response to increasing pressure change in the container.

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28. (Amended) A container as claimed in claim 27 which has a longitudinal axis and said [projections are] flexure region projects outwardly in a transverse direction relative to said longitudinal axis.

29. (Amended) A container as claimed in claim 27 in which said flexing of said flexure region results in an outward curvature of said [outward projection of said] flexure region lessening.

30. (Amended) A container as claimed in claim 27 wherein said initiator region [has an outward curvature which] merges smoothly with said flexure region and [progressively increases from said initiator region to said flexure region] said regions vary in outwardly projecting extent along an axis of said container.

31. (Amended) A container as claimed in claim 27 wherein said initiator region [has an outward curvature which] merges smoothly with said flexure region and progressively [decreases] varies in outwardly projecting extent from said initiator region to said flexure region.

32. (Amended) A container as claimed in claim 27 wherein [an extent of said outward projections relative to said plane] said flexure region varies in transversely radiating extent along an axis of said container.

33. (Amended) A container as claimed in claim 27 wherein said [projection of said] initiator region [extends] varies in transversely radiating extent along an [relative to a longitudinal] axis of said container.

34. (Amended) A container as claimed in claim [32] 27 in which a projection of said flexure region extends [transversely] inwardly relative to said longitudinal axis of said container.

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35. (Amended) A container as claimed in claim [33] 29 in which the initiator region inverts so as to reverse in curvature in response to vacuum pressure change within said container.

36. (Amended) A container as claimed in claim [34] 29 in which said flexure region inverts so as to reverse in curvature in response to vacuum pressure change within said container.

41. (Amended) A container as claimed in claim [40] 37 wherein the [flexible panel is substantially arcuate with the curvature of the initiator portion being less than that of the remainder of the flexible panel] initiator portion includes regions of minimal projection relative to said projecting portion.

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51. (Amended) A container [having a controlled deflection flex panel and] as claimed in [any one of] claim 47, including a pair of substantially inflexible regions between which said initiator region and said flexure region extend[s, a flattened region extending between said inflexible regions to provide an end portion of said initiator region].


Please *add* claims 65-70 as follows:

--65. (New) A biaxially oriented plastic container having a longitudinal axis, comprising:

a neck defining a mouth, a shoulder portion joined with said neck portion and extending downward therefrom, a bottom portion forming a base of the container; a side wall extending between and joining said shoulder portion with said bottom portion, said side wall having at least one vacuum panel for accommodating pressure change induced in the container;

said panel having a flexure region of outward curvature in cross-section, said flexure region having an initiator region and lesser outward curvature in cross-section, said regions merging together so that said initiator region can flex inwardly in response to pressure changes and cause said flexure region to progressively flex in response to increasing pressure change in the container.--

--66. (New) A container according to Claim 65 having more than one vacuum panel.--

 --67. (New) A container according to Claim 65 having a plurality of said vacuum panels spaced apart and separated by land areas or columns.--

--68. (New) A hot-fill blow-moulded plastic container having at least one controlled deflection flex panel for accommodating vacuum induced in the container, said flex panel having longitudinal and transverse extents, said flex panel having a flexure region with a longitudinally variable transverse curvature and a continuous flexure initiator region of a different transverse curvature, said curvatures smoothly merging together longitudinally so that motion of said flexure initiator region in response to vacuum is transferred to said flexure region for longitudinally progressively flexing said flexure region in response to increasing vacuum in the container.--

--69. (New) A container according to Claim 51 wherein a flattened region extends between said inflexible regions to provide a middle portion of said initiator region.--

--70. (New) A container as claimed in Claim 37 wherein the initiator portion includes regions of opposite projection relative to said projecting portion.--